

funding that some Palestinians unfortunately rely on to survive. But none of us here want to see the Israeli people suffer either. Hamas wants to and will take every opportunity to kill Israelis and Jews of other nationalities. It says so in their charter. And it was demonstrated just weeks ago in the bombing of a Tel Aviv restaurant, in which a close relative of my good friend ERIC CANTOR was murdered.

Leading the world by example is not easy, Mr. Speaker. It requires hard choices, it requires moral courage, and it requires standing on principle. Some of our closest friends overseas may try to take the easy way out by offering incentives to an unreformed Hamas government. But today the House stands with Israel, as we always have, against terrorism. We encourage the Administration to stand firm; and today we give them legislation to help them do just that. I look forward to working with colleagues from the Senate to get this bill to the President's desk. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 4681.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM KOLBE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I missed the following votes because I was traveling on a congressional delegation to Egypt: S. 1235, on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act, as amended (No. 177). Had I been present, I would have voted "aye." H.R. 3858, on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (No. 178). Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from the House floor during yesterday's rollcall votes on S. 1235, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act, and H.R. 3858, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act.

Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of both bills.

LOUISIANA SCHOOL RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

HON. BOBBY JINDAL

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. JINDAL. Mr. Speaker, recently more than 1,200 students from across the country participated in the national finals competition of We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution. This is one of the most extensive educational programs in the country developed specifically to educate young men and women about the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. The program is administered by the

Center for Civic Education and funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It is my distinct pleasure to announce the competition's Unit 5 Award winner: Grace King High School from Metairie, LA.

The national finals are an arduous 3-day academic competition that simulates a congressional hearing in which the students testify before a panel of judges on constitutional topics. Students from many schools demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles as they evaluate, take, and defend positions on relevant historical and contemporary issues. This year's winner, Grace King High School, is an educational institution known for high standards of academic achievement that has produced many talented students. The winners of this competition have proven through their hard work and meticulous study of our Constitution that they are no exception.

Mr. Speaker, the names of these outstanding students from Grace King High School are as follows:

Aaron Baer-Harsha, Patrick Berrigan, Jaime Bruno, Lily Chen, Caitlyn Clarke, Paulius Donauskas, Janice Fan, Rebecca Felix, Jeremy Finnegan, Alice Ho, Tony Huang, Thomas Lambert, Krysten Le, Donald Levenson, Ali Mahbod, Elise Murphy-Mejia, Jacob O'Neil, Sean Olsen, Veronica Oro, Anna Plaksiy, Rachelle Ross, Olivia Saito, Sara Sands, and Murielle Telio.

I also wish to commend Jamie Staub, the teacher who was responsible for preparing the student class for the national finals competition. Also worthy of special recognition is John Alexander, the State coordinator, who is among those responsible for implementing the program in my district.

Mr. Speaker and my colleagues in the House, please join me in congratulating these young constitutional experts from Louisiana for their outstanding achievement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I was absent on Monday, May 22, 2006, due to unavoidable circumstances in my congressional district. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" to S. 1235—The Veteran's Benefits Improvement Act of 2005 and "yea" to H.R. 3858—The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2005.

PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, the January victory of Hamas in parliamentary elections in the Palestinian territories was a shock to observers worldwide and to the many of us in the United States and abroad who have repudiated violence be-

tween the Palestinians and the Jews and have repudiated attacks on the state of Israel.

The election was a shock to the peace efforts in the Middle East because its outcome resulted in the Palestinian government being controlled by a party that was legitimately elected by the voters of the Palestinian territories but that also is a party that sponsors terrorist acts against the Israeli people and whose doctrine is based upon the notion that the existence of Israel is an affront to Islam.

For there to be any progress towards peace under a Hamas-led Palestinian government, Hamas must immediately acknowledge Israel's right to exist; uphold all previous agreements including the Roadmap for Peace; rid itself of all terrorist ties and dismantle its terrorist infrastructure; ensure the continuation of democratic institutions; and how fiscal transparency. If they do not, Hamas cannot expect the support and recognition of the United States and other governments.

However, any actions carried out by the U.S. Government against Hamas must address Hamas specifically and not the Palestinian people generally and must not undermine our goals in the Middle East. The bill being voted on today by the House would undermine the U.S. Government's ability to further the peace process and it would clearly hurt the Palestinian people. It could also lead to chaos in the Palestinian territories, which would be counter to both American and Israeli interests.

I am not alone in saying that denying all aid, except in the most isolated of instances, to the Palestinian people runs counter to both American and Israeli security interests. If we provoke a humanitarian crisis there, it may very well lead to the collapse of the Hamas government but not without potentially severe costs to both law abiding Palestinians and the peace process at the same time. And it could also erode civil order.

We do not and must not ever support terrorists in the Palestinian government. However, the United States must continue to support programs providing the Palestinian people's basic needs such as food, water and medicine; programs supporting democracy, human rights, freedom of the press and non-violence; as well as peaceful co-existence with Israel.

That is why I voted against H.R. 4681. The United States has already cut off direct aid to the Hamas government. This bill would not have brought additional penalties directly to Hamas. That objective has already been achieved. But it would penalize the Palestinian people and greatly limit the Administration's diplomatic options in pursuing peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

I hope that a conference committee with the Senate might produce legislation that addresses my concerns and the concerns of my other colleagues and of many well-regarded organizations and individuals who are deeply pro-Israel and who are great supporters of humanitarian efforts in the Middle East. I look forward to being able to support a revised bill that will send the proper message to Hamas that its violence toward Israel will never be supported and to the Palestinian people that the United States stands ready to work with them to resolve this most difficult and important conflict in peace.